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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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RUEHBC/REO BASRAH PRIORITY 2134  
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK PRIORITY 2102  
RUEHMOS/REO MOSUL PRIORITY 2106  
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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001852

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY IN ANTICIPATION OF KARADAH  
SECURITY TRANSFER

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Classified By: PRT BAGHDAD ACTING DEPUTY LTC OTTO BUSHER FOR REASONS 1.  
4(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Over the last three weeks, the Karadah District Advisory Council (DAC) has faced a surge in threats, and targeted killings, which has resulted in the deaths of two council members and has forced the long-standing Karadah DAC chairman to flee the country. Council members have told PRT that the upswing in violence is linked to the upcoming security transfer to local Iraqi police control on June 12, and have expressed concerns about the abilities of the local police to provide for their safety. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Karadah, a wealthy district of central Baghdad, has been long-regarded as a relatively safe community. The Karadah District Advisory Council (DAC) has been among the most effective in all of Baghdad, in no small part due to the strong leadership of its chairman, Mohammed Al-Rubaie. Over the past month, however, the climate in Karadah has taken a turn for the worse, with a string of assassinations, explosions, and threats against local leaders.

¶3. (C) PRT Baghdad first became aware of a shift in Karadah upon hearing of the death of a DAC member in the Zafraniyah neighborhood of east Karadah on May 10. The council member was reportedly gunned down while leaving his office in the early afternoon. The following Monday, less a day after the funeral for the first victim, another council member was killed, this time in his home. Both attacks appear to have been planned in advance and specifically targeted at the two victims.

¶4. (C) Another significant blow to the Karadah DAC occurred late last week, as Chairman Mohammed al-Rubaie, having been besieged by threats alleging a Sunni hit squad en route from Damascus to kill him, opted to move himself and his family to safety outside of Iraq. Before departing, Al-Rubaie told PRT staff that, "the terrorists are getting ready for their chance, not just for me but for my district." When asked by PRT whether he had contacted the police, Mohammed's only comment was, "what can the police do? How can I trust them with my life?" On May 31, PRT IPAO received a call from Mohammed's brother informing PRT that Mohammed's house had been bombed earlier that day. In Mohammed's absence, and with the security situation appearing increasingly precarious in the eyes of council members, the DAC may discontinue

regular meetings for the near future. Further, Provincial Council Economics Chairman Dr. Kamel Al-Shabibi informed PRT staff on 27 May that the Karadah DAC representative called him to say that he would not be attending any Provincial Council Economic committee meetings because he felt that the risks were too great. Shabibi, a Karadah resident himself, stated that other DAC members may follow suit in the coming weeks.

¶5. (C) PRT staff has received other indications of a downturn in security perceptions in Karadah. Beginning on 20 May, PRT staff began receiving calls from businesspeople in the district who explained that they are in the process of liquidating their inventories in anticipation of security problems in the coming weeks and months. (Note: Though anecdotal, these accounts are especially troubling given Karadah's status as one of Baghdad's safer and more prominent shopping districts. End Note.) PRT contacts in the district say that a series of bombings targeting liquor stores on the Karadah peninsula over the past two weeks have also led to a greater feeling of insecurity, as has the high-profile IED attack on 29 May in Karadah which killed a US soldier and two members of a CBS news crew.

¶6. (C) Comment: While the remarks above may not be all-inclusive, they represent a broad range of concern among the residents of the district. Given the perception among Karadah residents that security is on the decline, it is particularly important for the provincial government and the MOI to bolster public confidence for local police in the area if the planned security transition is to prove effective. PRT will continue to work with the remaining district council leadership to help maintain local government in the immediate future, but renewed feelings of security among council members will ultimately be required to sustain the organization. MND-B has indicated to PRT staff that it does

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not intend to transfer the Karadah Peninsula to Iraqi Police lead until conditions support that transfer and only in coordination with the Governor, the Mayor, and the commanders of the Iraqi Police, National Police, and the 6th Iraqi Army Division.  
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